

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 00121 062205Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /050 W
-----088502 070154Z /64

R 062000Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9086
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0121

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, JM
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF STATE ON DUDLEY THOMPSON'S NEW APPOINTMENT

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 0120

1. IN THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON JANUARY 6, MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING RICHARD FLETCHER STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA (GOJ) HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY APPREHENSIVE REGARDING THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION. GIVEN THE PRESENT PARLOUS STATE OF SECURITY, THE APPOINTMENT OF SENATOR DUDLEY THOMPSON AS MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY IS A VERY POSITIVE STEP TOWARD BRINGING THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL.

2. FLETCHER WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHILE THE FORMER MINISTER, KEBLE MUNN, IS AN HONEST, DEDICATED AND VERY ESTIMABLE MAN, HE LACKED THE RUTHLESSNESS REQUIRED TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE CURRENT UNREST. FLETCHER SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY WANTS A NATIONAL SECURITY MINISTER WHO IS PREPARED TO TAKE HARD
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DECISIONS ON HIS OWN. MUNN HAD THE UNFORTUNATE HABIT OF BUCKING UNPLEASANT MATTERS TO THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS THEN REQUIRED TO AGONIZE OVER THEM, FLETCHER CONTINUED. MANLEY WILL BE FAR HAPPIER WITH A MAN LIKE THOMPSON WHO WILL BE QUITE PREPARED TO ACT UNILATERALLY. THERE WILL BE INSTANCES WHEN THOMPSON WILL GO TOO FAR AND HAVE TO HAVE HIS WRIST SLAPPED BUT HE CAN BE

COUNTED ON TO DO A FAR MORE EFFECTIVE JOB. THE PLANNING MINISTER THEN ADDED THAT THE CHOICE OF THOMPSON WILL SIMPLIFY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE (JDF). ACCORDING TO FLETCHER, IN THE ABSENCE OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY, THE JDF IS REQUIRED TO FUNCTION UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE POLICE WHEN IT ASSISTS IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER. MUNN'S CONTROL OVER THE POLICE WAS FLABBY, AND THUS THE JDF FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH A POLICE FORCE WHICH HAS BEEN DEEPLY AFFECTED BY CORRUPTION AND INDISCIPLINE.

3. FLETCHER STATED THAT THOMPSON'S APPOINTMENT IS TIMELY SINCE THE SECURITY SITUATION IS INCREASINGLY UNCERTAIN. POINTING TO AN INCIDENT WHICH HAD OCCURRED THE PREVIOUS DAY, IN WHICH SECURITY FORCES HAD SURPRISED A PARTY OF FOURTEEN GUNMEN USING A JDF FIRING RANGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF KINGSTON FOR FIRING PRACTICE, AND HAD KILLED FIVE IN THE ENSUING MELEE (THE REMAINING NINE ESCAPED), FLETCHER SAID THAT THERE IS A LIVE IF NOT YET IMMEDIATE DANGER THAT URBAN GUERRILLAS COULD BEGIN TO OPERATE IN KINGSTON. HE SAID THAT THERE ARE ALREADY LINKS BETWEEN CRIMINALS AND "ANARCHISTS", AND INCREASED EFFORTS TO ENHANCE SECURITY ARE URGENTLY NEEDED. THOMPSON IS THUS A GOOD CHOICE TO TAKE OVER THE NATIONAL SECURITY MINISTRY -- "HE IS HARDHEADED AND FAR FROM SQUEAMISH."
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KINGST00121
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780011-0481
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780193/aaaacxyz.tel
Line Count: 95
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 449801e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 KINGSTON 120
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3819065
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF STATE ON DUDLEY THOMPSON'S NEW APPOINTMENT
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, JM, STATE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/449801e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014